

2018

ANNUAL REPORT



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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

Dear Friends,

Our Companions Animal Rescue was founded in 2002, after receiving a gift of 43 acres of land in Ashford, Connecticut, for the purpose of building Connecticut's first animal sanctuary, rehabilitation, and adoption center.

Today, 16 years later, we have accomplished several phases of construction at the Sanctuary and have changed and saved the lives of hundreds of our community's most vulnerable animals (those who are older, traumatized, abused, or neglected).

In addition to providing this much-needed Sanctuary resource, we also provide many other rescue services at our Valerie Friedman Program Center in Manchester, CT. Many of the programs offered are "pet-retention services" that aim to keep pets and people together. These include dog and cat behavioral services, training classes, support services for feral cats, veterinary assistance, and public education.

In this year's annual report we are pleased to share our statistical accomplishments in 2018 and some special stories that reflect the compassion and dedication of the community of people who make our work each year possible.

It is powerful to know that since our founding in 2002, so many have invested in our mission to always do the right thing for animals. While the 16 years have been extraordinary, it's what lies ahead that truly invigorates us. And we look forward to continuing on this journey with you.

On behalf of all the people and animals at Our Companions, we thank you for your support and commitment to our shared promise to do the right thing for animals.

Sincerely,



Maria das Neves
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria das Neves".



Susan B. Linker
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan B. Linker".

LIVES IMPACTED IN 2018: 1389



HOMES SAVED: 167

**SANCTUARY REHABILITATION
AND ADOPTIONS: 203**

COMMUNITY SUPPORT: 1005

Our Companions Animal Rescue's central governing principle is to always do the right thing for animals. Our Companions' many programs are housed at the Valerie Friedman Program Center in Manchester, Connecticut and at its 47-acre Sanctuary, in Ashford, Connecticut.

Our Companions provides many programs that help homeless animals in need today, while working to prevent pet homelessness in the future. It is our pleasure to share some highlights from 2018.

HOMES SAVED

Keeping Pets and Their Families Together: 167 Lives Impacted

While finding a new home for a pet is necessary in some situations, it is also a stressful and often traumatic experience for the animal. Since our first priority is to keep animals and their human guardians together, we offer innovative solutions to people who may be feeling overwhelmed and are contemplating rehoming their pet.

Our behavioral assistance programs tackle many issues that often lead to a family's decision to surrender a pet. There are instances where we are able to keep families together by providing pet care supplies or veterinary assistance. In other cases, we have skilled staff and volunteers who provide advice and recommendations on how to negotiate with landlords when housing challenges arise. Our Companions also has an invaluable resource in its trained Animal Helpline volunteers who take the time to speak with and offer recommendations to callers who need help.

Regardless of the specific program, whenever we are able to preserve a pet's home, it is something to be celebrated. We are proud that in 2018, we were able to preserve the homes of 167 pets. As we enter 2019, it is our goal to expand and enhance our pet retention services, offering additional ways to keep even more people and pets together.



HOMES SAVED



SADIE

Desirae made a heart-breaking call to Our Companions' Animal Helpline requesting financial assistance to euthanize her three-year-old Chihuahua who was suffering from glaucoma in both eyes. This extremely painful condition is treatable but Desirae was unable to afford the \$2,000 surgical procedure her vet had quoted her.

Cases like this of “economic euthanasia” are very common and devastating to pet guardians. Imagine being faced with having to prematurely end your companion’s life simply because you cannot afford a life-saving medical procedure. This was the situation Desirae faced that day when she called our Helpline.

Thank goodness she reached out to us, since this is a highly treatable condition. Our Companions went straight to work calling on our veterinary partners for assistance. After consulting with several veterinarians including a veterinary ophthalmologist, we were able to work out a plan. Our Companions provided funding through our veterinary assistance program to cover the cost of the procedure, and worked with Desirae to set up an affordable monthly repayment plan.

Sadie had her surgery and almost immediately shifted from being an anxious, pain-riddled dog to a relaxed, more confident companion to Desirae. Desirae and Sadie make a great team and will enjoy many more happy years together.

BOO

When Jay adopted him, Boo, a two-year-old hound/terrier mix, was very timid and shy. Six months later, Jay contacted Our Companions in the hope of finding Boo another home as he was growling and snapping at people who were not familiar to him, and was still very frightened and shy.

In his evaluation for acceptance into the Our Companions rehoming program, Boo did not want to interact with anyone but Jay. This made it extremely unlikely that Boo would appeal to potential adopters, since he wasn't emotionally capable of meeting new people. It was recommended that Jay and Boo enroll in our Family Companions 1 class to build Boo's confidence, practice meeting people, and strengthen their relationship with each other. Boo started to come out of his shell when he learned that meeting people could be a positive experience, and of course receiving a treat sweetened the deal. He and Jay enjoyed learning new skills and began to build a relationship of trust and deeper respect.

During the eight-week class, Jay watched Boo make great strides, and resolved that he would keep his canine buddy and continue to work with him to make him more comfortable and confident. They enrolled in Family Companions 2, as well as a Sports and Games class, where Boo soon revealed a spirited and funny personality he had apparently been too scared to show before.

Success stories like Boo's happen every day at Our Companions. Thanks to our behavioral intervention programs, situations that seem hopeless can be resolved, keeping canine-human relationships intact and poised for many years of happiness.



BOO STARTED TO COME OUT OF HIS SHELL WHEN HE LEARNED THAT MEETING PEOPLE COULD BE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

HOMES SAVED

LARRY

Carolyn had applied to adopt a pair of three-year-old purebred Persian littermates from a rescue in New Hampshire. When she arrived to pick them up, she was told that they had a nine-year-old half-brother who had to go with them because they were a bonded threesome. Carolyn had not planned to adopt three cats, but Larry was part of the deal.

She brought him home to live in her small house and over the next year and a half he developed four urinary tract infections (UTIs). On the last occasion, the vet suggested that Carolyn rehome Larry because the stress of living in a multi-cat environment was causing his chronic UTIs.

Carolyn was very upset at the prospect of rehoming Larry. She called us looking for a second opinion. Our Feline Behavior and Medical Manager told her about feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD). They discussed diet, tips for increasing water intake, and the role stress plays in the disease. It was also recommended that Carolyn incorporate environmental enrichment activities that would keep stress to a minimum and provide positive bonding opportunities for her and her cats.

THANKS TO CAROLYN'S COMMITMENT TO MAKING THE CHANGES WE RECOMMENDED, LARRY HAS MADE GREAT IMPROVEMENTS. HE HAS BECOME A RELAXED, HEALTHY CAT AND CAN NOW LOOK FORWARD TO A HAPPY LIFE WITH HIS DEVOTED GUARDIAN AND FELINE SISTERS.



SANCTUARY

Sanctuary Rehabilitation and Adoption: 203 Lives Impacted

Each year in Connecticut's shelters, adoptable animals are destroyed, many of whom could have been saved if they had a proper environment for longer-term rehabilitative care. The Sanctuary's purpose is to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of animals. Our 47-acre Sanctuary provides a home-like setting that is conducive to a longer-term stay, and offers a low-stress, enriching atmosphere that encourages healing and rehabilitation.

The Sanctuary also serves as an adoption center, providing an inviting place for people to meet the animals. Throughout the adoption process, and beyond, OC provides personalized support, including pre-adoption counseling, assistance while the animal is settling in, and support throughout the animal's lifetime.



SANCTUARY

QUINCY

Quincy's adoption was extra special for the staff and volunteers who knew him. He was very shy, scared, and it took him a long time to come out of his shell. His original guardian had taken him in as a feral cat and after a lot of hard work, she and Quincy developed a strong and trusting bond. Unfortunately his guardian had to enter assisted living a few years later. For a shy, mistrusting cat, the best place for Quincy was the Sanctuary. There he would be given the necessary space to adjust, with lots of love and support from helpful and patient volunteers. While Quincy did require a great deal of patience and extra effort to overcome his fear, he eventually thrived and after 712 days at the Sanctuary, he found his forever family.

QUINCY'S ADOPTION WAS EXTRA SPECIAL FOR THE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WHO KNEW HIM... AFTER 712 DAYS AT THE SANCTUARY, HE FOUND HIS FOREVER FAMILY.



MITCH

Mitch was hit by a car on a snowy day in March. The person who hit him tried to follow his tracks, but was hindered by the huge snowbanks that Mitch disappeared into. Thankfully, just a few days later, Mitch was picked up by local Animal Control. He was limping but otherwise okay. When no one claimed him, we transferred him to our vet for further evaluation and brought him to the Sanctuary for rehabilitation. Mitch was extremely under-socialized. He was terrified of strangers, particularly men, and upset by any new situations.

Early in Mitch's stay at the Sanctuary, Deb, a volunteer, met him and wanted to take him home. Given his unresolved behavioral issues, we thought it was too premature for Mitch to be adopted, but Deb was not deterred and agreed upon a plan of action. She participated in training classes at the Sanctuary and brought him to classes at our Valerie Friedman Program Center. She arranged multiple meetings with her dog, proceeding very slowly so that they had positive, nonthreatening experiences together. Mitch met everyone who was important in Deb's life prior to joining her family. She finally adopted him just a little over a year after he was brought to the Sanctuary.

"HE STOLE MY HEART AS SOON AS I SAW HIM, AND I ALSO SAW POTENTIAL THROUGH HIS DEFENSIVE BEHAVIORS," SAYS DEB. "I HAVE A LOT OF FAVORITE PICTURES OF MITCH, BUT MY FAVORITE IS WITH MY 100-YEAR-OLD MOM. HE LOVES HER AND SHE IS TAKEN WITH HIM."



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Community Support: 1,005 Lives Impacted

Our Companions is committed to helping animals far beyond the walls of our Sanctuary and Program Center. We believe that supporting people and pets in our larger community will lead to the evolution of a more humane society for all.

Adopt a Shelter Program -- Supporting Municipal Animal Control Shelters: 21 Lives impacted

Our Companions feels strongly about supporting the work of Animal Control Officers who keep our communities safe and investigate animal cruelty complaints. Our Adopt a Shelter program provides free dog behavior evaluations to Animal Control facilities throughout the state. Volunteer dog trainers in the Canine College program also provide in-shelter training for dogs in municipal Animal Control facilities to make them more adoptable. In addition the Adopt a Shelter program provides free educational programs for shelter staff and discounts on dog training classes for their adopters.

LUNA

Luna, a five-year-old English Bulldog, was abandoned and found herself at the Middletown Animal Shelter. She had been used exclusively for breeding and had little to no human contact in her life. Realizing that an un-socialized dog would be a challenge to place into a home, the Animal Control Officer reached out to Our Companions requesting assistance from our Adopt a Shelter Program (where our dog trainers provide free training, socialization and behavior assistance to dogs in municipal animal shelters).

For several months Our Companions volunteer Dog Trainer Daryl Carbone spent hours sitting on the kennel floor with Luna reading a book before Luna would even eat the treats she tossed in her direction. Eventually Daryl's patience paid off and they became friends.

Since Luna was capable of forming a bond with one person, we knew we could build on this foundation. It was quickly determined that the Sanctuary was the place for Luna to receive the further care and rehabilitation she needed.



Luna has been at the Sanctuary for several months and she has blossomed. She enjoys her daily walks on the hiking trails and is more comfortable being around new people and has made many new friends. Luna also has been going to Our Companions Family 1 class. Thanks to the compassion of one very progressive Animal Control Officer, an exceptionally patient volunteer in our Adopt a Shelter Program, and the unique rehabilitative care we offer at the Sanctuary, Luna will have a bright future in a loving home someday soon.

Community Cat Assistance: 420 Lives Impacted

In Connecticut, there are hundreds of thousands of cats that are free-roaming and in need of help. Having been born outside, without human contact, many of these cats have never been socialized with people. Through our Sterile Feral program, we provide TNR, or Trap-Neuter-Return, services for those who are feeding community cats so they can get them vaccinated and sterilized. Once the cats are sterilized, Our Companions provides cat food assistance and warm cat shelters. Our Companions also provides free veterinary care for any cats in the colony who may become sick or injured. The community cats and their human caregivers are in great need in our state, and are a very important population that we serve at Our Companions.



STERILE FERAL PROGRAM - PAULA ZEINER

“I just finished my third feral cat project in Hartford, CT, made possible with the help of Our Companions. This time around six girls and three boys were immunized from disease and permanently relieved from the demands of parenthood. While that may sound like a good outcome, the feral cat population will need constant vigilance by all of us who care for animals.

“No one in the neighborhood claimed ownership or responsibility, but the population quickly grew from three kittens to as many as 10 cats. I contacted Our Companions, and was trained on how to safely and humanly trap cats through their Sterile Feral program. Throughout the week-long process the kitties seemed to just accept what came, at every stage—the rides in the car, feedings in captivity before and after surgery, and always, the comfort that came when after their procedures they were returned to their outdoor homes. If I had to describe them in one word, I would say ‘admirable’ sums it up.

“I hope to raise funds to further the good work of Our Companions. Right now we are fashioning winter shelters. Another volunteer, Isaiah is able to pet at least one of the smaller kitties, and so we will try to socialize, with the hopes of finding a forever home.”



PHOTOS: [Top] Credit: Jim Michaud, JOURNAL INQUIRER [Bottom] Paula Zeiner

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Animal Placement: 164 Lives Impacted

Despite our best attempts to keep pets in their original homes, circumstances sometimes arise which necessitate a pet's being placed in a new home. Our Companions provides a creative animal placement service or "rehoming program" that works with the public to transfer pets directly from their original home into a new, loving home, as seamlessly as possible. Our Companions provides volunteer Adoption Caseworkers through its Animal Helpline. The Caseworker gets to know the adoptable animal, creates marketing pieces to advertise the animal's availability, and works to find the best match for a new home. This program also involves the assistance and cooperation of the original owner so they have the opportunity to meet the new adoptive family. Most importantly, this program saves the animal the stress of having to enter a shelter or rescue facility.



Buddy Project: 31 Lives Impacted

The Buddy Project is an innovative program that pairs at-risk youth with rescued dogs. The goal of the program is to provide mutually beneficial experiences for the students and the dogs. The students learn how to train the dogs using positive-based training methods, which prepares the dog for later adoption and also provides the youth with a model for positive social interactions.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Thanks to strong fiscal controls, sound professional oversight, and careful Board leadership, Our Companions has received the highest rating possible by Charity Navigator. The four-star rating is classified as "Exceptional," meaning that it "exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its cause." We actually scored 99.67 out of 100!



3-YEAR INCOME & EXPENSE SUMMARY

	2018	2017	2016
Donation & Service Fee Income	1,553,549	1,048,448	967,329
Other Restricted Grants	45,168	11,760	10,123
Other Income/Expense	(12,284)	80,200	41,405
Total Income	1,586,433	1,140,408	1,018,857
Total Operating Expenses	1,276,845	1,048,683	939,628
Net Operating Surplus/Deficit	309,588	91,725	79,229
Capital Campaign Income	137,000	61,000	764,978

OUR COMPANIONS 10-YEAR ANNUAL FUND HISTORY

Total Annual Fund Donations

2018	1,268,672
2017	1,025,283
2016	943,523
2015	975,883
2014	850,064
2013	738,480
2012	620,629
2011	511,282
2010	358,574
2009	392,683
2008	297,785

Note that Annual Fund Donations exclude program fees, restricted donations, capital campaign donations and "other" income.

3-YEAR COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET SUMMARY

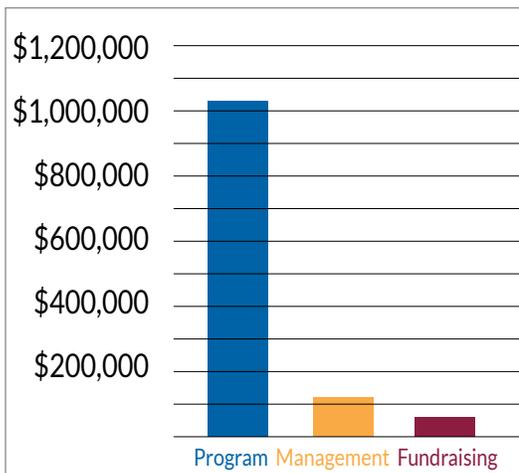
	12/31/18	12/31/17	12/31/16
General Fund Cash	811,509	641,596	725,606
Board Restricted Fund	605,896	622,647	546,693
Capital Campaign Fund	-	-	927,995
Other Restricted Cash	184,473	7,081	2,835
Other Long & Short Term Assets	261,881	-	-
Net Fixed Assets	3,177,112	3,316,893	2,231,300
Total Payroll Tax Liabilities	(14,216)	(7,048)	(5,985)
Net Assets	5,026,657	4,581,169	4,428,444

Balance Sheet Highlights The 3-year condensed balance sheet comparative is presented above. The General Fund Cash increased to \$811,509 at 12/31/18. Other Restricted Cash is comprised primarily of \$158,690 set aside for a future vet clinic. Other Assets consists of \$193,500 in accounts receivable, \$50,709 in accrued revenue and \$17,672 in prepaid expense. Total liabilities continue to be extremely low (\$14,216) with net assets increasing to \$5,026,657. This strong balance sheet positions Our Companions extremely well for future growth.

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSE STATEMENT

All 501(c)(3) non profit organizations are required to issue an annual functional expense statement which breaks out total expense by 3 categories; Program, Management & General, and Fundraising. This statement is the main indicator of how much of its income an organization spends on its core programs. In 2018, Our Companions' total expenses were \$1,276,845 of which \$1,094,299 (85%) was expended on its core programs. \$122,245 (10%) was allocated to management cost and another \$60,301 (5%) for fundraising. A full detailed version of the functional expense report can be viewed on the federal tax return available on OC's website.

2018 EXPENSES BY FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY



Program 85%
\$1,094,299

Management 10%
\$122,245

Fundraising 5%
\$60,301

Complete detailed income statement and balance sheet reports are available at OurCompanions.org

MAILING ADDRESS

Our Companions Animal Rescue

P.O. Box 956

Manchester, CT 06045-0956

860-242-9999

Fax 860-331-8555

FACILITY LOCATIONS

Ashford Sanctuary

46 Floeting Road

Ashford, CT 06278

Visiting Hours: Saturday, 1pm-3pm and by appointment

Valerie Friedman Program Center

34 Sanrico Drive

Manchester, CT 06042

Hours: M-F 9am-5pm and by appointment

OurCompanions.org